1915

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FRIDAY
JANUARY
1st.

To start this diary rightly, it should begin on the last day of the old year, when, at breakfast, I received a letter from Mrs Hallett. She said that she had had to dismiss Lily at a moments notice, owing to her misbehaviour. We naturally supposed that a certain kind of misbehaviour was meant; a married gardener, I hazarded. Our speculations made us both uncomfortable all day. Now this morning I hear from Lily herself. She writes, very calmly, that she left because Mrs Hallett was insulting to her, ~~because~~, having been given a ~~week~~ day & nights holiday, she came back at 8.30 A.M. 'not early enough'. What is the truth? This, I guess: Mrs H. is an old angry woman, meticulous, indeed as we knew tyrannical, about her servants; & Lily honestly meant no wrong. But I have written for particulars – another lady wanting a character at once. Then I had to write to Mrs Waterlow about the Chimney sweeping charge foisted on us, such a letter as comes naturally to the strong character, but not to the weak. And then we trudged to the Co-ops: in rain & cold to protest against their bookkeeping. Manager a bored languid young man, repeating rather than defending himself. Halfway home we heard "British warship . . . British warship" & found that the Formidable has been sunk in the Channel. We were kept awake last night by New Years Bells. At first I thought they were ringing for a victory.

SATURDAY
JANUARY
2nd.

This is the kind of day which if it were possible to choose an altogether average sample of our life, I should select. We breakfast; I interview Mrs. de Grys. She complains of the huge Belgian appetites, & their preference for food fried in butter. "They never give one anything" she remarked. The Count, taking Xmas dinner with them, insisted, after Pork & Turkey, that he wanted a third meat. Therefore Mrs. de G. hopes that the war will ~~be~~ soon be over. If they eat thus in their exile, how must they eat at home, she wonders? After this, L. & I both settle down to our scribbling. He finishes his Folk Story review, & I do about 4 pages of poor Effie's story; we lunch, & read the papers, agree that there is no news. I read Guy Mannering upstairs for 20 minutes; & then we take Max for a walk. Halfway up to the Bridge, we found ourselves cut off by the river, which ~~rose~~ rose visibly, with a little ebb & flow, like the pulse of a heart. Indeed, the road we had come along was crossed, after 5 minutes, by a stream several inches deep. One of the queer things about the suburbs is that the vilest little red villas are always let, & that not one of them has an open window, or an uncurtained window. I expect that people take a pride in their curtains, & there is great rivalry among neighbours. One house had curtains of yellow silk, striped with lace insertion. The rooms inside must be in semi-darkness; & I suppose rank with the smell of meat & human beings. I believe that being curtained is a mark of respectability— Sophie used to insist upon it. And then I did my marketing. Saturday night is the great buying night; & some counters are besieged by three rows of women. I ~~I~~ always choose the empty shops, where I suppose, one pays ½ a d. more. And then we had tea, & honey & cream: & now L. is typewriting his article; & we shall read all the evening & go to bed.

SUNDAY
JANUARY
3rd.

It is strange how old traditions, so long buried as one thinks, suddenly crop up again. At Hyde Park Gate we used to set apart Sunday morning for cleaning the silver table— Here I find myself keeping Sunday morning for odd jobs— typewriting it was today— & tidying the room— & doing accounts which are very complicated this week— I have 3 little bags of coppers, which each owe the other something. We went to a concert at the Queen's Hall, in the afternoon. Considering that my ears have been pure of music for some weeks, I think patriotism is a base emotion. By this I mean (I am writing in haste, expecting Flora to dinner) that they played a national Anthem & a Hymn, & all I could feel was the entire absence of emotion in myself & everyone else. If the British spoke openly about W.C.'s, & copulation, then they might be stirred by universal emotions. As it is, an appeal to feel together is hopelessly muddled by intervening great coats & fur coats. I begin to loathe my kind, principally from looking at their faces in the tube. Really, raw red beef & silver herrings give me more pleasure to look upon. But then, I was kept standing 40 minutes at Charing X Station, & so got home late, & missed Duncan who came here. Moreover, London on a Sunday night now, with all its electric globes half muffled in blue paint, is the most dismal of places. There are long mud coloured streets, & just enough daylight & insufficient electric light, to see the naked sky, which is inexpressibly cold & flat.*

* The Times today has an article upon the "Stars of London"— "We may gain from them a serviceable impulse to that steady concentration on enduring issues of which stars are a true symbol, & the glare of London is not." So be it. ([illegible])

MONDAY
JANUARY
4th.

I do not like the Jewish voice; I do not like the Jewish laugh: otherwise I think (in Saxon's phrase) there is something to be said for Flora Woolf. She can typewrite, do shorthand, sing, play chess, write stories which are sometimes accepted, & she earns 30/ a week as the secretary of the Principal of the Scottish Church in London. And in doing these various arts she will keep lively till a great old age, like a man playing with five billiard balls.

The outside world burst in upon us with a clamour this morning. 1. I had a letter from Mrs. Hallett. 2. I had a letter from Lily. 3. L. had a document from Sydney Waterlow. According to Mrs. Hallett, Lily hid a soldier in the Butlers pantry; she also met soldiers at the gates; & thus Mrs. Halletts house got a bad name in the village, besides which Mrs. Hallett herself was alarmed (there being ladies only in the house.) Lily confesses merely to one brother, but adds that Mrs. H. is very ill, as well as very old. As for Sydney's letter — I am so sick of it that I can't describe it. The house was dirty — 4 people scrubbing for a fortnight only succeeded in making it tolerable; & so on — all of which would have been suffered in silence but for my note. So I wrote to him, & I wrote to Lily — & after spending some time in phrasing virtuous sentiments nobly, I see clearly how officials skins grow thick & shiny. To Lily I said that she must promise to behave better, if I gave her another character — for I am sure poor Mrs. Hallett & her trembling old sister heard soldiers voices whenever there was a wind in the laurels. Philip came after luncheon, having 4 days leave. He is sick to death of soldiering — told us tales of military stupidity which pass belief. They found a man guilty of desertion the other day & sentenced him; & then discovered that the man did not exist. The Colonel says, "I like well dressed young men — gentlemen" & gets rid of recruits who tend to sink below this level. In addition to this the demand for cavalry at the front is exhausted, so that probably they will stay at Colchester for ever. Another dark rainy day. An aeroplane passed overhead.

TUESDAY
JANUARY
5th.

I had a letter this morning from Nessa, who calls Mrs. Waterlow a German hausfrau, & ~~and~~ advises us not to pay a penny – ~~the~~ Cleanliness is a fetish not to be worshipped, she says – Certainly, neither of us do worship it; I suppose Mrs. W: ran about with a duster, & dabbed her fingers under beds. I can imagine the list of discoveries she gave Sydney, sitting smoking over his philosophy – & how she cursed that [illegible] slut Virginia Woolf – At the same time, it is a recent phenomenon among servants to find the house they go into filthy, & to leave it bright as a pin – But enough of Waterlows & their slop pails. We worked as usual; as usual it rained. After lunch we took the air in the Old Deer Park, & marked by a line of straw how high the river had been; & how a great tree had fallen across the towing path, crushing the railing beneath it. Three bodies were seen yesterday swiftly coursing down stream at Teddington. Does the weather prompt suicide? The Times has a queer article upon a railway smash in which it says that the war has taught us a proper sense of proportion with respect to human life. I have always thought we priced it absurdly high; but I never thought the Times ~~said~~ would say so. L: went off to Hampstead to give the first of his lectures to the Women's Guild. He did not seem nervous; he is speaking at this moment. We rather think that old Mr Davies is dying – but I have an idea he'll resist for years to come, although he wants to die, & his life prevents Margaret from much work. I bought my fish & meat in the High Street – a degrading but rather amusing business. I dislike the sight of women shopping. They take it so seriously. Then I got a ticket in the Library, & saw all the shabby clerks & dressmakers thumbing illustrated papers like very battered bees on very battered flowers. At least they are warm & dry; its raining again today. The Belgians downstairs are playing cards with some friends, & talk – talk – talk – while their country is destroyed. After all, they have nothing else to do –

The Waterlows again: Lily again. Mrs W. wrote to Leonard this morning about the oven, & ends by being very much distressed to think we are annoyed—seeing how delightful they find Asheham. It is a queer thing that both the ladies in this correspondence write to both the gentlemen—feeling instinctively I believe, that if they wrote to each other, the whole affair would become much more acid.
Lily's letter continues the story of the hidden soldier. It brings her very clearly before me, with her charming, stupid, doglike eyes, quite incapable of hurting a fly or thinking a coarse thought, & yet bound eternally to suffer for the sins of stronger characters. In this case, she was at the mercy of a ~~house~~ parlourmaid who invited the soldiers, & Lily had neither the strength of mind to be rude to them, when they came, nor to 'tell tales of a fellow servant'. "I would rather do anything than that"—& that, I imagine, was how she lost her baby too. Anyhow, I have 'spoken' for her again, & she has promised to have no more to do with soldiers.
L: went off at 10. A.M: to give his second lecture at Hampstead. The first was a great success, as I knew it would be. He finds the women much more intelligent than the men, in some ways too intelligent, & apt on that account not to see the real point. He has another to give this afternoon, so he is staying up at Hampstead, lunching with Lilian, & perhaps seeing Janet. No one except a very modest person would treat these working women, & Lilian & Janet & Margaret, as he does. Clive, or indeed any other clever young man, would give himself airs, & however much he admired them pretend that he didn't—
I wrote all the morning with infinite pleasure, which is queer, because I know all the time that there is no reason to be pleased with what I write, & that in 6 weeks, or even days, I shall hate it. Then I went to London, & asked at Grays Inn about Chambers. They had a set vacant; & I at once envisaged all sorts of chances, & let myself into them with a thrill of excitement. But they would be perfect for one, & impossible for two. There are 2 perfect rooms, looking

WEDNESDAY
JANUARY
6th.

The Waterlows again: Lily again. Mrs W. wrote to Leonard this time, about the oven, & ends by being very much distressed to think we are annoyed – seeing how delightful they find Asheham. It is a queer thing that both the ladies in this correspondence write to both the gentlemen – feeling instinctively I believe, that if they wrote to each other, the whole affair would become much more acid. Lily's letter continues the story of the hidden soldier. It brings her very clearly before me, with her charming, stupid, doglike eyes, quite incapable of hurting a fly or thinking a coarse thought, & yet bound eternally to suffer for the sins of stronger characters. In this case, she was at the mercy of a ~~house~~ parlour maid, who invited the soldiers, & Lily had neither the strength of mind to be such [illegible] when they came, nor to 'tell tales of a fellow servant'. "I would rather do anything than that!" – & that, I imagine, was how she got her baby too. Anyhow, I have 'spoken' for her again, & she has promised to have no more to do with soldiers.

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over the gardens; & that is about all. Tiny, ~~[illegible]~~ rooms . . . thunders behind one. Next I saw a flat in Bedford Row, which promised divinely, but on asking at the agents was told they had just been instructed ~~only~~ to let it only furnished — And now, of course, I am convinced that there is no flat in London to equal it! I could wander about the endless streets in Holborn & Bloomsbury for hours. The things one sees — & guesses at — the tumult & riot & busyness — get all — crowded streets are the only places, too, that ever make me what in the case of another one might call think. Now I have to decide whether I shall go up again, to a party at Gordon Sqre, where the Stracheys are playing. On the one hand, ~~I know that with the~~ I am tired, the evening & the journey; on the other I know that with the first chink of light in the hall & chatter of voices I should become intoxicated, & determine that life ~~had~~ held nothing comparable to a party. I should ~~see~~ see beautiful people, & get a sensation of being on the highest crest of the biggest wave — right in the centre & swim of things. On the third & final hand, the evening, reading by the fire here — reading Michelet & the Idiot, & smoking & talking to L: in what stands for slippers & dressing gown, are heavenly too. And as he won't urge me to go, I know very well that I shant. Besides there is vanity. I have no clothes to go in.

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THURSDAY
JANUARY
7th.

No— we didn't go to the Garden Sqre party. Leonard got back too late, & it rained; & really, we didn't want to go. The lectures were a great success. One old lady told Leonard that they should consider him a personal friend for life; another said that he was the only gentleman who spoke so that working women could understand. He explained Bills of Exchange & so on for an hour; & then answered questions, which again, were amazingly intelligent. I started off after lunch today, first to go to the Foundling Hospital & ask whether they would let us have Brunswick Square, or half the house; then to the Omega to buy Janet a 10/- shawl, & then to tea with Janet. Mr Chubb opened the door to me at the Hospital. He was sitting at a writing table in a very warm comfortable room, looking on to the garden; while a clerk drew plans of houses on a very high desk— Mr Chubb is growing fat. He recognised me & became immediately extremely courteous. Brunswick Sqre is already practically let to a retired Ceylon Civil Servant, called Spence, who may however be willing to let the two upper floors, which would suit us very well. I became, of course, possessed with a passion to have Brunswick Square. Mr Chubb, who has infinite leisure, & likes conversation, discussed every possibility. He did not himself admire Adrian's frescoes, but said that most people do. The Ceylon gentleman proposed to cover them with a curtain, being apparently ~~undecided~~ of opinion that they were too good to destroy, though not nice to look upon. He is a bachelor, perhaps rather a cranky bachelor, once Chief of the Colombo Lunatic Asylum— At this point a Secretary came in, also excessively polite when he heard my name. "Mrs Woolf certainly has a very strong claim to the house" he said. "And I myself don't think Spence is quite right" — "I do" Mr Chubb replied firmly "I've looked him up in the Medical Directory— besides, he seems all right" "He looks all right certainly" the Secretary

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agreed, "but I don't know"— However it wouldn't be playing the game to refuse at the eleventh hour. "The twelfth you may say" said Mr. Chubb. At last I left, shaking hands all round, & having begged Mr. Chubb to do his best & let us know— They advised me to see a house in Mecklenburgh Sqre, which I did. It is a vast place, with a great ~~cold~~ hall, & a sweeping staircase; & we could have a flat at the top— the only objection being that Grays Inn Road is at the back—

When I got out, it was raining. I walked to the Omega however & bought my stuff from a foolish young woman in a Post Impressionist trance—

I went to Hampstead, found some elderly lady there already, went to the station, in order to avoid tea with Sophie, & then was allowed up to Janet. She is in bed, & will have to stay in bed for weeks. Her nerves are thoroughly wrong. She can't read, or do anything— I can guess what she feels like— & how miserable she must be very often— especially since she is growing old, & Sophie must be wearisome with her repetitions, & general enthusiastic vagueness. & then, the fag end of life — Still she is trained to be brave, & so unselfish by nature that other people really interest her. We talked about Leonard, & Lily, & life in London & Hardy's poems which she can't re-read— too melancholy & sordid— & the subjects not interesting enough— I don't agree. It grew late; & she suggested that I should dine there & go with L: to the Peace Debate at the Women's Guild. I couldn't face dinner, so I retreated to the Public Library. On the way I walked through one of the worst downpours I have ever been in. It was more like a shower bath than natural rain. My shoes squeaked so with wet as I walked up the Library that I was ashamed. Then I dined at a Cabmans Eating house— the only dining place, & very good. Coarse, but clean & sober. At 8 I met L: at 28 Church Row. The rooms are old white panelled rooms; one was full of working women— It was a comfort (after reading those terrific letters of childbirth) to see how the women roar with laughter like school girls. Mrs Hobson spoke— It was very good— The women impressive as usual— because they seem to feel, & to have such a sense of responsibility.

Another letter fr. Mrs Waterlow—

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FRIDAY
JANUARY
8th.

Sydney Waterlow came to lunch with us today 'to make sure' as he put it 'that we had not quarrelled over ~~those~~ wretched matters'. We discussed little else for the first hour & a half. My first letter had given him a sleepless night, he told us, though Mrs. Waterlow in spite of pregnancy slept sound. As far as we could make out, Mrs. W: acts & writes impulsively; when Sydney bestirred himself to think, he was appalled to realise that their behaviour was not ethically sound. He cogitated for long, devoted a whole morning to his reply, & has taken the advice of several friends, who happen to agree with him that chimneys are usually swept by landlords. "But then we should have asked your leave – I entirely yield that point – only" & so on & so on; all in the ~~best~~ solid simple style, which is so like him. His fat pink body always seems to me boneless & hairless like that of a gigantic child; & his mind is the same. But there is a charm about him.

He & L: went for a walk. I went to Chancellors, ~~asking~~ to ask ~~at~~ whether there was any news of Hogarth. At first the man said no. When I told him that we might take a house in London, he at once confessed that he had twice seen Mrs. Wortner, the present tenant, & that she does not like the house. Is this invented, &, if not, is there some good reason why she does not like it? It seems likely that we shall have to choose between Brunswick & Hogarth – unless both fail us. Sydney came back to tea, & told us how Alice had been to see them, & how he had at once ~~treated~~ regretted her "as one might regret a very fine walking stick – She was so pretty & happy with a great fat baby. The house was full of our furniture – like a house of death to me –" But when I suggested that the present Mrs. W. had been uncomfortable he was amazed – "She isn't that sort of person at all" he said "She's perfectly sensible ..." Still, if she saw Sydney treating the walking stick, I thought — Sydney replied that Margy (as he calls her) was so infinitely more to him than the walking stick that she couldn't feel anything of the kind – He went off to Asheham. They want to take it on for another 6 months – He has no work to do, but Asheham is so delightful that he is perfectly happy doing nothing

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SATURDAY
JANUARY
9th.

At two o'clock this morning several barges moored in the river broke loose. One crashed into Richmond Bridge, & knocked off a good deal of stone from one of the arches — the others went to the bottom, or drifted down stream. All this I mention, not because we saw or heard anything of it, but because we noticed the damaged Bridge as we walked to Kingston this afternoon. The stone is yellower inside than out, which makes it more obvious. We had a very good walk. The purplish fields outside Kingston somehow reminded me of Saragossa. There is a foreign look about a town which stands up against the sunset, & is approached by a much trodden footpath across a field. I wonder why one instinctively feels that one is complimenting Kingston absurdly in saying that it is like a foreign town. On the towpath we met & had to pass a long line of imbeciles. The first was a very tall young man, ~~slightly~~ just queer enough to look twice at, but no more; the second ~~was~~ shuffled, & looked aside; & then one realised that every one in that long line was a miserable ineffective shuffling idiotic creature, with no forehead, or no chin, & an imbecile grin, or a wild suspicious stare. It was perfectly horrible. They should certainly be killed. We found a market going on at Kingston, as if it were Marlborough. We bought a pineapple for 9d. The man said they had all ripened on his hands, &, as he expected another boatload on Tuesday, he had to sell at a loss. We had a bad tea in a very pretentious place. We came back by train with a working man & two small boys. The working man began to tell us about the Lyons meat contract scandals, & told us that he was attached to the flying department at Hounslow. He was very clever, & should have been an M.P. or a journalist at least. I see Will Vaughan quoted in the Times to the effect that teachers neglect the grammar of modern languages, & talk too much about style & literature; but nothing fortifies the character & mind so much as grammar. How like Will!

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SUNDAY
JANUARY
10th.

I was sitting typewriting this morning when there came a tap at the door;— someone whom I thought at first was Adrian, appeared: it was Walter Lamb however, fresh from the King. Whenever he has seen the King he comes to tell us. He insisted that we should go for a walk with him in Richmond Park. What did we talk about? We forgot about the King, & Walter told us a long inexpressibly dreary story which Professor Housman had told him, about the inefficiency of the French soldiers. Whatever Walter says, has the same flat, smooth, grey surface, & his voice alone would dull the fieriest poetry in the world. Nor does he deal in fiery poems. His life now lies among respectable, semi-smart, rich people, whom he half despises, so that his accounts are always a little condescending. The one passion of his life is for eighteenth century building. All the time this morning he was bidding us admire a moulding or a window pane or even a 'fan light'. He sees over any house that is to let, apparently, & notices the internal decorations. He knows who now lives in big houses, & who once lived in them. He is perfectly soaked by Kew, & the Royal Academy, & the Royal Family. On our doorstep he burst at length into an account of the last Royal visit, when the King, who now treats him as a friend (or as rather, as Leonard says, like a superior footman) suddenly stopped admiring the pictures, & asked Princess Victoria where she got her false teeth. "Mine, George exclaimed, as always, dropping into my plate: they'll be down my throat next. My man is a rascal. I'm going to leave him." Victoria then gave a tug to her front teeth, & told him that they were as sound as could be — perfectly white & useful — The King then went back to the pictures. His style of talk reminds me of George 3rd in Fanny Burney's diary — & so one must bless Walter for something — He refused to lunch with us, saying that he had lived on pheasants all the week, & rhubarb was forbidden him, on account of his acidity. It rained hard — all the afternoon, & now. Marjorie Strachey who was to dine with us, can't come because of a cold. I heard last night from Mrs Chubb that old Spence won't let any part of Brunswick Square —

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MONDAY
JANUARY
11th.

Leonard was in his bath this morning, & I was lying in bed, wondering whether I should stretch out my hand for Rob Roy when I heard a commotion next door, & then someone rushed downstairs crying in a strange, unnatural voice "Fire! Fire!" As it was obvious that the house was not on fire, to any large extent, I put on my waterproof & slippers before I looked out of the window. I then smelt paper burning. I then went into the passage, & found smoke pouring from the open door of the next room. There was clearly time to escape, so I withdrew; & heard Lizzy return with the lodger: & heard her begin "I only put a bit of paper to draw the fire —" from which I guessed what had happened. "In ten minutes the room would have been ablaze" said the lodger. L: came back; & we looked out of our window & saw a large Japanese screen, all in flames, burning on the grass plot. Later, I heard that the paper had caught; the drapery on the mantelpiece had caught; the screen had caught; the woodwork had caught. As every room in the house is lined with dry old wood, loosely papered over, 10 minutes I think, would have put the fire beyond water jugs — The lodger was in terror, too, for his priceless rugs: 'worth hundreds & hundreds' according to Mrs Le Grys — the wonder is how we have escaped so far considering Lizzy. Yesterday she smashed two very nice bits of China for us.

We went up to London this afternoon: L: to see the Editor of the New Statesman about an article on diplomacy — I to go over a flat in Mecklenburgh Square. We met unexpectedly in M. Sqre. When we reached the house, however, the occupier refused to let us see it. So we had to apply to the owner, who lives a few doors off. We were shown into a beautiful room, which was disfigured horribly with velvet curtains, gigantic purple cushions, & the usual swarm of gilt & lemon coloured objects. The woman herself sat in an invalid chair, arranged, like a child's high chair, with a bar across it. Her hair (a flaxen wig) was plastered on either side of her head, & she had the usual powdered plump rouged look of

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Monday cont.

Bloomsbury ladies. They always make us both physically uncomfortable. She was very sensible however, a business woman, I suppose, owning several houses, & running them, I'm sure, at a profit. She made us see over her house, instead of the other one. We were taken over by a small, wizened, very amiable old lady, who had disfigured her part of the house until it was scarcely recognisable — The drawing room in particular, where she had lavished her skill, made your eyes start with its innumerable, discordant, hideous small things — ~~tables~~ the clusters of flags displayed on the tables ~~are~~ ~~about~~ chubbily impending. There were all the flags of all the nations, I should think; all the photographs of all the royal families. It was like looking into a kaleidoscope, because of the innumerable separate dots of ~~bright~~ colour — & yet they weren't colours. I went on to Days Library & L. to the London Library. He has to write an article of 1200 words ~~before~~ by Wednesday noon, on Diplomatists — A wonderful subject anyhow.

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Tuesday
January
12th

Today does not begin with a fire. Leonard however had to take Mrs de Grys to task for Lizzy's sins. The poor woman could only agree. Since she knows she is going, she doesn't mind how many plates she breaks — if she would only go. Mrs de G. finds it impossible to get a servant; she pays them only £10 a year however.
Cecil came to luncheon, in mufti, I observed. In fact they are both utterly sick of the army, & see no chance of going to the front. Nevertheless, Cecil ~~neither~~ thinks of ~~staying~~ being a permanent soldier, because the life is better than a Barrister's life. On the other hand, he & Philip may go to the Colonies. The odd thing about the Woolf family, to me, is the extreme casualness of it. In my family, the discussion & agitation that went on about the slightest change in one's way of life were endless; but with the Ws: it doesn't much seem to matter whether they turn farmers, run away with another man's wife, or marry a Polish Jew tailor's daughter. I remember how elaborately Aunt Mary concealed the fact that Hervey's young woman was a kind of shopkeeper, & how indefatigable she was until the engagement was broken off. Perhaps the Ws: haven't a family tradition. It gives a sense of freedom anyhow. From all this, obviously I have nothing to say. L. & Cecil walked to Kingston after lunch; I pottered about buying small fragments of meat & vegetables, & got some books out of the library. I believe we shall find it more useful than the London Library, as no one, save ourselves, reads solid books. L. is now writing his article upon Diplomacy, & I must go & typewrite. An entire fine day for a wonder;

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Wednesday January 13th

W 13th.

I caused some slight argument (with L.) this morning by trying to cook my breakfast in bed. I believe, however, that the good sense of the proceeding will make it prevail; that is, if I can dispose of the Eggshells. L. went off to the New Statesman office this morning with his article. I lunched here, & then went to Days, to get new books. Days at 4 in the afternoon is the haunt of fashionable ladies, who want to be told what to read. A more despicable set of creatures I never saw. They come in furred like seals & scented like civets, condescend to pull a few novels about on the counter, & then demand languidly whether there is *anything* amusing? The Days' attendants are the humblest & most servile of men. They tow these aged Countesses & pert young millionairesses about behind them, always deferential, & profuse of "ladyships". The west end of London fills me with aversion; I look into motor cars & see ~~them~~ the fat grandees inside, like portly jewels in satin cases. The afternoons now have an elongated pallid look, as if it were neither winter nor spring. I came back to tea. L. arrived—having seen Gordon Sqre & Maynard (who says German finance is crumbling) & Saxon, who is recovering from influenza. He had a headache. So, instead of going to the Co-op: meeting, we are staying at home.

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Thursday
January
14th

We were woken this morning (I see that is going to become a stock phrase like 'Once upon a time' in a fairy story) by a thumping throbbing sound as if a motor omnibus were on the roof, endeavouring to start. Experience told us, however, that Lizzy had merely made a huge kitchen fire, when there was no water in the pipes. When L. turned on the tap, steam issued, as if it were Siegfried's dragon at Covent Garden,—& then came floating bits of pipe, & the water was rust red— Nobody, however, seemed to think that the boiler might burst. We wrote all the morning. I heard from Adrian, by the way, who has gone into rooms in Cambridge without a single sheet; how I begin telephoning & writing about sheets, just as the Waterlows are silent. After lunch, we set off to Kingston in order to buy some charming cups, which are to be had there for a 1d each. If Lizzy doesn't go, & continues to behave as though each day were her last, we must give her something cheap to break her rage against. We came home on the top of a bus; making up phrases in the manner & tone of Walter Lamb. Leonard is going up to hear the Fabians discourse; I think I shall indulge in a picture palace — but why? I shall certainly come out saying to myself, "Nothing will induce me ever to go to a picture ~~pl~~ palace again"? I also heard from Annie, who evidently intends to be our permanent cook, for the excellent reason, I think, that ours is the easiest place in England. The Waterlows say that her young man has removed to — or been replaced by one at Willesden. L's article on Diplomacy is to come out on Saturday. He was, of course, convinced after sending it that it would be rejected [this is a note, for future use & quotation]

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Friday January 15th

I went to my picture palace: & L: to his Fabians; & he thought, on the whole, that his mind & spirit & body would have profited more by the pictures, than by the Webbs, & the Doctors who were talking about their Etiquette. There were 2 or 3 superb pictures; one of a barge laden with timber floating past Bagdad — another of an Eastern palace, overrun with tigers & pariah dogs — another of a sunken yacht. But as usual, the drama is very boring. I wish one liked what every one likes. The Hall was crowded. Roars of laughter, applause &c.

I heard from Sophie Case this morning, who wishes me to find out about the Home at Lewes where Lily had her child — as she knows a young woman who also wants to have a child. I wonder how Sophie comes across these things. Janet much the same.

We walked to Hogarth this afternoon, to see if the noise of School children is really a drawback. Apparently it would only affect Suffield — Well — I wonder what we shall do. I'd give a lot to turn over 30 pages or so, & find written down what happens to us. We walked into the Park. & saw Territorials flogging & spurring their carthorses; also a great fallen tree. We are dining early, & going to a Hall — an unheard of dissipation — though there was a time when I went out to operas, evenings, concerts &c — at least 3 times a week — And I know we shall both feel, when it's over, 'really a good read would have been better'

L: continues to read Diplomatists; I read about 1860 — the Kembles, Tennyson & so on; to get the spirit of that time, for the sake of the third generation. They were immensely scientific, always digging up extinct monsters, & looking at the stars, & trying to find a Religion. At this moment, I feel as if the human race had no character at all — sought for nothing, believed in nothing, & fought only from a dim sense of duty.

I began today to treat my corn. It had to be done for a week.

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Saturday
January
16th

I think the Hall (Colissum) last night was worth while—in spite of drawbacks. What I like in Halls are 'turns'—Comic singers, or ~~people~~ men imitating Prima Donna's, or Jugglers. I dont like one act plays. It takes me a whole act to get into a play, & so one act plays are mostly sheer boredom. Therefore I was disappointed to have 3 one act plays: one the Barrie Der Tag—sheer balderdash of the thinnest kind about the German Emperor; then a play about a woman who means Parrot when she says Pirate; third Dr. Johnson. To begin with Johnson spits bread & butter through his nose; to end with he is paternal, sentimental—as tender as a woman—which is of course what he was bound to be on the stage. However there was a man who sang like a Prima Donna; & a patriotic Revue—People clapped Grey more than anyone—We left, just as an Eastern Gem, coloured grey & violet, shot up in the middle of the stage;—& I didnt see my war pictures, but departed meekly as a lamb. We wrote this morning. L's article by the way ~~both~~ reads very well in the New Statesman. I had a request from Adrian for silver, glass, kitchen things. They seem to have set up house without a single article. He wrote by a candle light, stuck in a saucer. L. went to the L. Library: I took Max along the River, but we were a good deal impeded, by a bone he stole, by my suspenders coming down, by a dogfight in which his ear was torn & bled horribly. I thought how happy I was, without any of the excitements which once, seemed to me to constitute happiness. L. & I argued for some time about this. Also about the worthlessness of all human works except as a means of keeping the workers happy. My writing now delights me solely because I love writing & dont, honestly, care a hang what anyone says. What seas of horror one dives through in order to pick up these pearls—however they are worth it.

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Sunday January 18th.

The morning was unremarkable — in the afternoon, Herbert came & took L for a walk. I went to a Queen's Hall Concert, stayed for three beautiful tunes, & came back to find Herbert who stayed on till dinner time. M. S. came to dinner; changed, somehow, at the first glance. improved, I thought, though noticeably thinner. She complained of sleeplessness & in the usual S. way of 'being shattered', & life being 'too fearful'. But she talked of ordinary things until after dinner. She began to harp very markedly on marriage — [I should say that for no reason at all she ~~told~~ said to us "I've a friend who thinks me rather beautiful, & very stupid" — & half suspecting something odd, I said "O he's a working man, & you mustn't marry him"] Well, she plied us more & more with questions about married life, & whether she should marry, & how she wanted to marry, & sometimes I thought she was only talking as so many unmarried people do, & then sometimes I suspected there was more. At last one of us (I, perhaps) said "Well but suppose, what d'you want to be?" "A married woman" she answered tragically. "But is there some one you want to marry?" "Yes!" — "Does he want to marry you?" "Yes!" — "Who is he?" She buried her face in her hands, then exclaimed "A married man!" Jos Wedgwood! We both gasped in silence. And then we discussed nothing else for an hour or two. It is about the oddest business I ever heard of — this is, giving more or less what has happened. Last summer Jos left his wife, or she left him, this point being doubtful. Since that, he has lived alone in London, & complained bitterly to Philip Morrell among others of his loneliness. Philip recommended a prostitute. Ottoline thereupon procured Marjorie. They asked her to dinner, & after dinner, Ottoline

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danced behind the folding doors, & left Marjorie to a tremendous tete a tete with Jos. Although this was their first meeting, he told her his history & his sorrows. Next day he called on Lady Strachey. They met constantly, &, a week or so before Xmas he proposed to her at Lockeridge. By this time she was much in love & accepted him — but what are they to do? She refuses to let him get a divorce, on the ground that a divorce is ignominious; he, moreover, says that a divorce would ruin him politically. He is tremendously ambitious. She wishes to live with him as his wife; but this of course means utter political ruin again. To be an ordinary mistress is out of the question for her. Lady Strachey again complicates the question, because she would be horrified at any unconventionality, & cannot be told yet. Then there is the fear of Mrs Wedgwood. If she hears will she try to get Jos back? Will she succeed? Half of the Stracheys (Lytton among them) advise M. to think no more of it. She is obviously in love, & also quite distracted & worn out. She is going to the South of France; Jos meanwhile is going to the Front. Well — what can one make of it all? Seeing M. in love, & her love returned, I felt that the only course was the extreme one. but when I reflected, particularly upon the way in which the thing has happened, the shouting of it, & bottling manoeuvres, I had doubts — about Jos, mostly. Isn't it a case of Sydney Waterlow over again? Will his feeling last, even if hers does? He was married for 20 years to Ethel, & they have 7 children. Leonard is pessimistic, & right I expect. He thinks that M— is going the worst way for her own prospects, apart from the horror of her position as a mistress, without any tie upon a man who admittedly cares more for his career than anything, & has been supplied with her to gratify wants which may quickly pass — But for some time now they will be apart, & so things may settle themselves. For her, I feel it is the great affair of her life, one way or the other. This morning, obeying a nocturnal command, I wrote to Thomas Hardy! thanking him for his poetry about father, & his works!

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Monday
January
18th

We were still a good deal under the influence of Marjorie this morning. All night (it seemed) people were banging boxes next door. ~~A~~ The lodger has got a wife back from New York. This afternoon we went over the houses in Mecklenburgh Sqre; ~~but~~ which ~~this~~ has led to a long discussion about our future, & a fresh computation of income. The future is dark, which is on the whole, the best thing a future can be, I think. L. went to the Webbs, & I came home — nor has anything happened since to be worth ~~put~~ putting down save that, as I began this page, L. stated that he had determined to resign his ~~pro~~ commission to write a pamphlet about Arbitration — a new ! I shall stop this Diary & discuss that folly with him. This is partly due to my egotistical habit of always talking the argument of my book. I want to see what can be said against all forms of activity & thus dissuade L. from all his work, speaking really not in my own character but in Effie's. Of course it is absolutely essential that L. should do a work which may be superbly good.

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Tuesday January 19th

L's melancholy continues, so much so that he declared this morning he couldn't work. The consequence has been rather a melancholy day. Outside it is very cold & grey too. We walked in Richmond Park this afternoon; the trees all black, & the sky heavy over London; but there is enough colour to make it even lovelier today than on bright days, I think. The deer exactly match the bracken. But L. was melancholy, as I say. All I can do is to unsay all I have said, & to say what I really mean. It's a bad habit writing novels — it falsifies life, I think. However, after praising L's writing very sincerely for 15 minutes he says "Stop", whereupon I stop, & there's no more to be said. When I analyse his mood, I think it must get to sheer lack of self confidence in his power of writing, as if he mightn't be a writer after all, & being a practical man his melancholy sinks far deeper than the half assumed melancholy of self centered people like Lytton, & Sir Leslie & myself. There's no arguing with him.

Well, I'm reading the Idiot. I can't bear the style yet very often; at the same time, he seems to me to have the same kind of vitality in him that Scott had; only, Scott merely made superb ordinary people, & D. ~~[illegible]~~ creates wonders with very subtle brains, & fearful sufferings. Perhaps the likeness to Scott partly consists in the loose, free & easy style of the translation. I am also reading Michelet, plodding through the dreary middle ages; & Fanny Kemble's Life. Yesterday in the train I read the Raleigh [illegible] which seems to me "supreme" — almost superhuman in its beauty & brilliancy — one really can't believe that such things were written down. I think one day I shall write a book of "Eccentrics". Mrs Grote shall be one. Lady Hester Stanhope. ~~An~~ Margaret Fuller. Duchess of Newcastle. Aunt Julia?

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Wednesday
January
20th

Having finished a chapter, I went off buying small fragments of things part of the morning. Among them, I saw a mass of pinkish stuff in the fishmongers, & bought it — Cod's Roe. Then I made carbon copies of some notes of L's about Arbitration. The action of nature has relieved his spirits more than all the arguments of his wife — also the day was fine. Anyhow one may now hope he will get started, which is the main thing. He went to the School of Economics after lunch; & I to Westminster. I want to see as many houses as possible. But in Barton St. the rent is £130! & that is low, on account of the war. Westminster, noiseless & shadowed by the Abbey is almost the heart of London. By this time it was raining. I went to Days, & found my book already sent. When I tried to remember the name of one, I failed utterly; so one must feel in an Examination. I read the Essay upon Criticism waiting for my train at Hammersmith. The Classics make the time pass much better than the Pall Mall Gazette. Maynard Keynes came to dinner. We gave him oysters. He is like quicksilver on a sloping board — a little inhuman, but very kindly, as inhuman people are. We gossiped at full speed about Adrian & Karin (Adrian's lovemaking done in loud judicious tones) & of Wane Mallory & Jos. Herr, Keynes' friends. Very amusing. I thought K. a little inhuman. He saw the humour & the fun, but didn't seem to see that it ought to be serious. Henry & Ottoline, he says, contrived the whole thing. Then we talked about the war. We aren't fighting now, he says, but only waiting for the Spring. Meantime we lavish money, on a scale which makes the French, who are fearfully cut at all corners, gape in admiration. We are bound to win — & in great style too, having at the last moment applied all our brains & all our wealth to the problem.

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Thursday
January
21st

Maynard last night was sceptical about the value of writing on Arbitration. He was sceptical about the value of almost all work, save for the pleasure it gives the worker. He works only because he likes it. This of course, depressed poor L: once more. He was very melancholy this morning, & had to spend the day at the British Museum, which was bad enough, even if one believed in one's drudgery. Still I believe it will be an enormous success, & if it doesn't prevent another war, it will put him among the eminent young men, which isn't altogether despicable. I went to the London Library — a stale cultured smoked place, which I detest. Here I read Gilbert Murray on Immortality, got a book for L: & so home, missing my train, & reading the letter to Dr. Arbuthnot on Hammersmith Station. L: came in late, having been up to Hampstead & seen Janet, who seems still the same; but so I think it must be, for months. Emphie annoyed with Margaret who advises a prescription, not cure, "which one doesn't do to the patient herself." Sylvia Milman came to dinner. After a good deal of bowing & scraping about China (which she has dutifully seen, in her endeavour to be advanced) we got on to memories of childhood which amused me, but bored L. I'm afraid. No one ever had a duller home than she had, but by sheer hard work, without a scrap of talent, she has plodded after the advanced ones, until she lives in a flat, saves money to travel, & helps at the Omega. Ida is nursing in France: Enid & Maud have a chicken farm. Clearly there was good stuff in the Deans; though never a spark of enthusiasm. She stayed on & on, until L. half rose from his chair.

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Friday
January
22nd.

When L. pulled the curtains this morning, practically no light came in; there was a kind of greyish confusion outside – soft swirling incessant snow. This has gone on all day almost, sometimes changing to rain. The Green itself is very lovely, & lights up the room with its pure white glare. But the streets became brown directly. Of course, in this House of Trouble, the pipes burst, or got choked; or the roof split asunder. Anyhow in the middle of the morning, I heard a steady rush of water in the wainscott, & Mrs Le Grys, Lizzie & various people have been clambering about the roof ever since. The water still drips through the ceiling into a row of slop pails. Mrs Le Grys cries hysterically "O it'll be all right – you're insured". The plumber refuses to leave his house in weather like this. We are going to hear the Fabians at ~~the~~ Essex Hall. I daresay we shall be ~~[illegible]~~ swept out of our beds tonight. It's a queer winter – the worst I ever knew, & suitable for the war made the rest of it.
I never said yesterday that I heard from Thomas Hardy! He wrote a very nice very characteristic letter, & was much pleased that I wrote. So that my natural impulse was from God.

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Saturday
January
23rd

The Fabians were well worth hearing: still more worth seeing. Mrs Atkinson drivelled at length about Peace—I can't understand always, & experts generally, ~~nearly~~ all that she said; so that I think it must have been very bad. The interest was watching Mrs Webb, perched like an industrious spider at the table; spinning her webs (a pun!—) incessantly. The hall was full of garment drab women, who are thought 'queer' at home, & rejoice in it; & of broadnosed, sallow short-headed young men in brown tweed suits. They all looked unhealthy & singular & impotent. The only speech that was worth anything came from Squire, who wears a bright ~~blue~~ shirt & cultivates an amusing appearance. He said it was all very dull—sensible—which it was; & the idea that these frail web spinners can affect the destiny of nations seems to me fantastic. But it was well worth seeing; & I have now declared myself a Fabian. We stayed in Richmond all day. We walked up the river, & were startled by the sudden fall of an avalanche of snow from a roof. It was very cold & misty. Jean asked us to go & hear some V.A.D's sing: but the fire after tea was too tempting. Oliver & Ray dined with us. Oliver as usual, very abrupt impatient & rather testy. Ray solid & capable & soothing. We discussed the war, & Marjorie "I cant <u>bear</u> to think yet—its <u>too</u> revolting" O. shuddered after saying that M. must of course live with Jos. as his mistress. Ray says she divides the world into those who are nice enough to be in love with, & those who aren't—& Marjorie isn't. They think her in love—but in love too with the drama of the situation. They share our fears too; but agree that anything in her case is better than nothing.

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Sunday
January
24th

In the middle of dinner last night Molly rang us up to ask whether she & Desmond might come to lunch today. Oliver returned that Desmond as he happened to know, had promised to lunch with Henry James. We told Molly this. It was news to her. So she came alone, about 12.30. We plunged of course into Gordon Square gossip. She has suffered acutely this winter, owing to a series of embroilments with Clive, the nature of which I can imagine; though whether he got bored first or she disgusted, I don't know. Anyhow, as I could have foretold, after violent scenes lasting almost 18 months, they have parted, & he abuses her, & she abuses herself — for ever having listened. But she finds that an ~~[illegible]~~ intermittent acquaintance won't do for her — 'garden party talk' he calls it, & she feels that intimacy in those circles leads to a kind of dustiness of soul. So she has broken, & now takes Desmond off to Freshwater ~~to~~ for 9 months, to live cheaply & write a novel. This is the very ~~[illegible]~~ last attempt — & it sounds a ~~little~~ desperate. He is to come up to town once in 6 weeks. She is to manage 3 children & the house with only one servant. And she means never again to come back into the whirl. Moreover they have quarrelled with ~~[illegible]~~ his mother, & forfeited £100 a year; so they must live on £350, which includes Desmond's weekly article in the New Statesman. She was incoherent, inattentive, fragmentary as usual; like a little grey bird among machines. L. went to see his mother; I called on Jean, whom I found sitting in black velvet in a room like a cheap restaurant with brilliant light. And there was old Mrs Thomas too, knitting incessantly; & we talked about waterpipes & soldiers; & so home, to a quiet evening thank God.

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Monday
January
25th

My birthday. – & let me count up all the things I had. L. had sworn he would give me nothing, & like a good wife, I believed him. But he crept into my bed, with a little parcel, which was a beautiful green purse. And he brought up breakfast, with a paper which announced a naval victory (we have sunk a German battleship) & a square brown parcel, with the Abbot in it – a lovely first edition – So I had a very merry & pleasing morning – which indeed was only surpassed by the afternoon. I was then taken up to town, free of charge, & given a treat, first at a Picture Palace, & then at Buszards. I don't think I've had a birthday treat for 10 years; & it felt like one too – being a fine frosty day, everything brisk & cheerful, as it should be, but never is. The Picture Palace was a little disappointing – as we never got to the War pictures, after waiting 1 hour & a half. But to make up, we finally caught a non-stop train, & I have been very happy reading father on Pope, which is very witty & bright – without a single dead sentence in it. In fact I don't know when I have enjoyed a birthday so much – since I was a child anyhow. Sitting at tea we decided ~~two~~ three things: in the first place to take Hogarth, if we can get it; in the second, to buy a printing press; in the third to buy a Bull dog, probably called John. I am very much excited at the idea of all three – particularly the press. I was also given a packet of sweets to bring home.

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Tuesday
January
26th

L: went up to the School of Economics this morning. I wrote as usual over the fire, with an occasional interruption by Lizzy, who is like a rough coated young carthorse, with muddy hoofs. After lunch I met L. at the gates of Kew Gardens, & we walked back to Richmond through the Gardens, which are now one feels teeming with bulbs – bulbs, though not a spike shows. He has already finished his Arbitration – such is the male mind – & will, I see, go through with it straight off & (here I make my plaster forecast) it will be a great success, & lead to as much work as he wants. As Molly sighed 'It must be wonderful to have a husband who works!' I think it would be much odder to have one who didnt – Mrs Woolf & Clara are coming to dinner, so I must stop

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Wednesday January 27

Mrs Woolf & Clara came to dinner. I don't know what it is about them — I daresay I'd better not try to define it. Perhaps their voices partly? — partly their manners. Anyhow, they gave us flowers & chocolates. Mrs W. sat & knitted. Clara smoked. I think Jewesses are somehow discontented. Clara is. Mrs W. has the mind of a child. She is amused by everything, & yet understands nothing; says whatever comes into her head — prattles incessantly, now good humoured, now ill humoured — She seems to like everyone equally, as if they were all the same. She told us how she used to go to bed with a basket of socks by her side, so as to start darning first thing in the morning.

Leonard went up to the School of Economics today. I wrote, & then went to Janet. Sophie & the Cook have influenza — I was met by an elder sister — a shrewd, sensible elderly woman, who has taken charge of things. Janet seemed better, & said she was better — We talked about my novel (which everyone, so I predict, will assure me is the most brilliant thing they've ever read; & privately condemn, as indeed it deserves to be condemned.) & about Shelley, & poets & their immorality. She said that in her young days she would have disapproved of Shelley's relations with women — But the old lady dodged in & out, which made conversation about morality unchancy. Home & finished Pope, & so to bed.

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Leonard off again to lunch with the Webbs, & have his Committee meeting. Once more I wrote. All these days, I may remark, are semidark, lightening a little about 3 P.M: before their final plunge into darkness; & yet I think even this darkness is the darkness of very early spring, not winter darkness any more. I decided to go to London for the sake of hearing the Strand roar, which I think one does want, after a day or two of Richmond. Somehow, one can't take Richmond seriously. One has always come here for an outing, I suppose; & that is part of its charm, but one wants serious life sometimes. As I dressed, my watch fell on the floor; & sitting at tea in a shop in the Strand, I found that the hands pointed to 4.30 still, though it went on ticking. So I took it to Frodshams, in South Molton Street, where I made great play with the name of McCabe, & the fact that the watch had been over 60 years in my family. Frodsham claims to be the only genuine watchmaker in London: the rest are jewellers. I saw a beautiful woman in the Bus; who could hardly contain her laughter because a great military gentleman was thrown on to her lap, like a sack of ~~Stokes~~ coals, which seemed to tickle her greatly, & the more she laughed, the nicer I thought her. About one person in a fortnight seems to me nice—most are nothing at all. Home to find L: triumphant from his Committee meeting. He is to do as he likes: & Squire throws out hints that they would like him to edit the Blue book supplement for them. Well 'I told you so'— A new servant has come today. Lizzy left, carrying a brown paper parcel & whistling loudly— I wonder where she has gone?

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Saturday

Friday
January
29th

Shall I say "nothing happened today" as we used to do in our diaries, when they were beginning to die? It wouldn't be true. The day is rather ~~like~~ like a leafless tree: there are all sorts of colours in it, if you look closely. But the outline is bare enough. We worked; after lunch we walked down the river, to that great mediaeval building which juts out into the river — it is I think a vast mill. And we came back early, so that L. might have tea before he went to a Committee at Hampstead. After that I bought our food, & did not observe much of interest. But the fact of the day for me has been a vague kind of discomfort, caused by the eccentric character of the new servant Maud. When one speaks to her, she stops dead & looks at the ceiling. She bursts into the room 'just to see if you are there'. She is an angular woman of about 40. who never stays long in any place. I believe she lives in dread of something. She puts down plates with a start. Mrs Le Grys says that she herself is going mad, with Maud's peculiarities. She has just announced that she is the daughter of a Colonel. I am sure her brain is full of illusions. poor creature; & I shouldn't be surprised at anything. The only question is, how she contrives to exist.

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Saturday
January
30th

L. went to Chancellors this morning about Hogarth. They now volunteer that Mrs Wentnar wishes to stay on — but will let us know on Monday for certain. It is a great nuisance. I have a nose for a house, & that was a perfect house, if ever there was one. We went to Wimbledon this afternoon, on the strength of Savage's information that there was a beautiful house there to let. Wimbledon is a dreary, high, bleak, windy suburb, on the edge of a threadbare heath. And Savage's house is an enlarged villa, with a rent of £150, furnished, overlooked by motor omnibuses, standing on the road. In all ways therefore utterly unsuited to us. We came home by Bus, & the world grew steadily nicer as we came to Richmond. Certainly this is the first of the suburbs by a long way, because it is not an offshoot of London, any more than Oxford or Marlborough is. It was icy cold; I had the grace to remember that many bus conductors are shivering today, but only stabs at my own comfort make me remember other people — unlike L. Maud's secret obsession, I believe, is that she is a lady. She attempts genteel talk, about the weather, as a Colonel's daughter very well might; & mutters something when she brings in the coal, about being accustomed to private work. She is certainly cleaner than Lizzie. I hope her mania won't develope. My corn is cured. I cannot get on with Michelet's middle ages. L. has Indian Blue Books to review. He was kept late at Hampstead; didn't get home till 10.15: when we had hot chocolate over the fire. He read Janet 'The Three Jews'

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Sunday
January
31st

O dear! We quarrelled almost all the morning! & it was a lovely morning, & now gone to Hades for ever, branded with the marks of our ill humour. Which began it? Which caused it? God knows. This I will say: I explode: & L: smoulders. However, quite suddenly we made it up, (but the morning was wasted) & we walked after lunch in the Park, & came home by way of Hogarth, & tried to say that we shan't be much disappointed if we don't get it. Anyhow, it hasn't got the green in front of it. After tea, no one came (we've hardly seen anyone this week) I started reading The Wise Virgins, & I read it straight on till bedtime, when I finished it. My opinion is that it's a remarkable book; very bad in parts; first rate in others. A writer's book, I think, because only a writer perhaps can see why the good parts are so very good, & why the very bad parts aren't very bad. It seems to me to have the stuff of 20 Duke Jones' in it, although there are lapses which wd. make their Sidgwick turn grey. I was made very happy by reading this: I like the poetic side of L: & it gets a little smothered in Blue books, & organisations.

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Monday
February
1st

I had to go out shopping this morning, & I called in on Chancellors. They say that Mrs Wontner makes conditions about taking on Hogarth, so that it is possible that she wont take it. So here we are on the see saw again. Mrs le Grys, also, told us this morning of a house on the Green, 3 doors off, which is to let in March. The rent is £65 & they want £75 premium. We went to look at it after luncheon, but, being a boarding house, couldn't see over it. What we saw was defaced in every possible way; but a nice substantial house, without the charm of Hogarth but then with the addition of the Green. We went up to London — L. to the London Library: I to Days. I walked with him across the Green Park. In St James Street there was a terrific explosion; people came running out of Clubs; stopped still & gazed about them. But there was no Zeppelin or aeroplane — only, I suppose, a very large tyre burst. But it is really an instinct with me, & most people, I suppose, to turn any sudden noise or dark object in the sky into an explosion, or a German aeroplane. And it always seems utterly impossible that one should be hurt. I was annoyed in the usual way at Days by the afternoon party of fashionable ladies, looking for books. We have just been rung up by Chancellors, who wish us to see the owner of Hogarth tomorrow & possibly by our presence & respectability cut out Mrs Wontner, whose &c &c have annoyed Chancellors. In fact it seems quite likely at this moment that we shall get Hogarth! I wish it were tomorrow. I am certain it is the best house to take.

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Saturday

Tuesday
February
2nd

Well it is tomorrow; & we are certainly nearer to Hogarth than we were. We have done little else & thought of little else all day, so it is as well we have some profit -

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Saturday

The House

She came

Saturday
February
13th

There was a great downpour this morning. I am sure however many years I keep this diary, I shall never find a winter to beat this. It seems to have lost all self control. We wrote; & after luncheon L. went to the Library, & I went to a concert at the Queen's Hall. I ran into Oliver Strachey, standing very like a Strachey in the Hall, because he dislikes sitting inside waiting for the music. I got by luck a very good place, for the Hall was nearly full — & it was a divine concert. But one of the things I decided as I listen (it's difficult not to think of other things) was that all descriptions of music are quite worthless, & rather unpleasant; they are apt to be hysterical, & to say things that people will be ashamed of having said afterwards. They played Haydn, Mozart no 8, Brandenburg Concerto, & the Unfinished. I daresay the playing wasn't very good, but the stream of melody was divine. It struck one what an odd thing it was — this little box of pure beauty set down in the middle of London Streets, & people — all looking so ordinary, crowding to hear, as if they weren't ordinary after all, & had an ambition for something better. Opposite me was Bernard Shaw, & a white haired benevolent old man, & down in the orchestra was Walter Lamb, shining with alabastrine baldness like a marble fountain. I was annoyed by a young man & woman next me who took advantage of the music to press each others hands; & read 'A Shropshire Lad' & look at some vile illustrations. And other people eat chocolates, & crumbled the silver paper into balls. I went to the W.C. at the Tube station, & found a small party going on in that chaste recess. The old woman had a vast female dog which was drinking water out of a tumbler, & we were all very friendly, in odd surroundings — & her daughters were paying an afternoon call, I thought it very sensible to have no false shame. I met L. at Spikings — we had tea, & were very happy: & stopped at Earl's Court & called on his mother. But she was out. We were shewn into a huge high sitting room, in which was a minute old lady, in semi darkness, sitting on the edge of a sofa. Nothing could have been more forlorn. L. has now got another book of Indian travels from the Times. He had just made up his mind that he was dismissed.

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Sunday February 14th

Rain again today. I cleaned silver, which is an easy & profitable thing to do. It'll soon be dirty again. Philip came, & he & L. went for a walk. He lunched with us, & stayed talking till 3.30. They despair more than ever now of getting to the front. All Regular officers are preferred above them. Cecil has a machine gun, which may lead to his going, & if so, almost certainly to his being killed. Poor Philip was a good deal agitated, I thought, with his prospects. What is he to do after the war is over? He thinks he must emigrate. Cecil would like to stay on in the Army, which however one can't do, unless one has money, & neither of them has a penny. Five hundred a year is considerably more valuable than beauty or rank. He stayed talking, wanting to talk about himself perhaps & had to go back to Colchester, where the only tolerable thing is the oysters. The men he declares never cease joking; & the worse things are, the more they joke.

Then we walked down the river, in the face of a cold gale (which is now raging outside) & gladly came home to tea; & now sit as usual surrounded by books, & paper & ink, & so shall sit till bedtime — save that I have some mending to do, my entire skirt having split in two yesterday. L. is writing a review of his Indian book. I am now reading a later volume of Michelet, which is superb, & the only tolerable history. The ~~ppl~~ people next door are singing the same song that they've been practising these 3 months — a hymn. From all this, it is clear that I don't want to mend my dress; & have nothing whatever to say.

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Monday February 15th

There is nothing to record of this morning; except my conviction that Mrs Le Grys is the best tempered woman in England, & if she gets her 20 roomed house at Southampton, will make it a gigantic success. We have only to hint that we want dog soap, & she washes Max — (who badly wanted it)

We both went up to London this afternoon; L. to the Library, & I to ramble about the West End picking up clothes. I am really in rags. It is very amusing. With age too, one is less afraid of the superb shop women. These great shops are like fairies palaces now. I swept about in Debenhams & Marshalls & so on, buying, as I thought with great discretion. The shop women are often very charming, in spite of their serpentine coils of black hair. (By the way, I met Walter Lamb at Dover Street station — A gentleman in frock coat, top hat, slip, umbrella &c: accosted me. I fairly laughed. It was old Wat: who had just been lunching with an M.P's wife, & seeing all the grandees. His satisfaction is amazing: it oozes out everywhere.) Then I had tea, & rambled down to Charing Cross in the dark, making up phrases & incidents to write about. Which is, I expect, the way one gets killed. L. went to tea at Gordon Sqre where he saw Mrs Hutchinson, who is the present flame, but a very smoky one. Clive anyhow, approves our scheme of a Periodical, & he is a man of business, whatever he may be as an artist. I bought a ten & elevenpenny blue dress, in which I sit at this moment.